
USG POLICY ON RWANDAN REPATRIATION

The early return of the refugees to their places of origin is the most sustainable response to their plight. However, repatriation must be voluntary. no refugee should be forcibly returned to a place where s/he has a well-founded fear of persecution. The choice to return is made by the refugees themselves.

All of our actions will be coordinated with the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) and like-minded members of the international community. Logistical concerns should not be allowed to take higher priority than concerns over physical and legal protection.

Full conflict resolution is not necessarily a pre-requisite for effecting a voluntary repatriation program. Repatriation could become itself an essential part of the process of national reconciliation and peace, rather than simply a result of it. As confidence building measures are put in place inside Rwanda and as security improves, the USG will seek to more actively encourage refugee return. In the interim, the focus will be on creating the political conditions requisite for voluntary repatriation.

The U.S. will continue to act to address the urgent life-saving needs in Zaire and other refugee-hosting nations while planning continues for repatriation.

CONTEXT FOR REPATRIATION

Creating a context for voluntary repatriation (and for the return of the internally displaced to their homes) requires action on several fronts -- building confidence/a sense of security (among the refugees/displaced and within the new government), being ready with a material capacity to assist return movements, and taking action to prevent disinformation being spread by former government leaders in the refugee camps.

Refugees will choose to go home when they believe that they will be secure in Rwanda. they did not flee their country because they were hungry; nor will they return because an international relief effort might provide food and other aid to them in Rwanda. Most in Zaire are still too fearful and/or weak to return to Rwanda. Refugees not only fear retribution/revenge from the new government but also fear getting caught in the

UNCLASSIFIED

cross-fire in any future conflict between the government and defeated rwandan troops.

Actions will be taken with a view to promoting national reconciliation, including accountability, and avoiding the creation of cleavages or worsening of existing ones.

----- BENCHMARKS FOR ENCOURAGING REPATRIATION -----

The USG will proceed cautiously in actively promoting repatriation (through radio announcements, psyops campaigns, public announcements) beyond general statements of support for repatriation until such time as there are better indicators that refugees can return or are returning in safety. Examples of such benchmarks are:

- Unamir is deploying in key refugee return areas in Rwanda.
- French forces are effectively replaced by unamir troops.
- Reports of retribution of returnees and/or other hutus become isolated events.
- The movement of rwandans leaving Rwanda largely ceases.
- Sufficient human rights monitors are deployed throughout Rwanda.
- UNHCR more actively encourages repatriation--beyond general support for repatriation as is now currently the case.

----- SPECIFIC ACTIONS -----

Military/peacekeeping

- Fully deploying unamir to enable the U.N. force to show a deterrent presence throughout the country.
- Disarmament and demobilization of rump far forces and interahamwe militia, both inside Rwanda and in Zaire and Tanzania.

Human Rights

- Establish credible national and international systems for identifying, apprehending, trying, and punishing those guilty of genocide.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

--Urgently field enough human rights monitors so that the entire country can be covered.

--Prevail upon the new government to smartly and publicly discipline those who may have been guilty of exacting summary justice.

--Facilitate, as needed, ICRC - new government contacts with the objective of training the armed elements in the proper treatment of non-combatants in times of conflict.

Political

--Convince the new government to take an active role in disbanding displaced person camps, particularly those of the "strategic hamlet" variety that it has set up in eastern Rwanda.

--Impress upon the new government the necessity of taking and publicizing steps to protect access of the refugees and displaced persons to lands and properties that they left behind. Land questions should be dealt with promptly, fairly, and transparently.

--Put in place regional agreements (or a series of bilateral agreements) that will allow for the voluntary return and accommodation inside Rwanda of the "old" refugee population of which the RPF had been a champion. This amounts to a re-activation of the UNHCR regional plan of action as prescribed by the dar declaration of 1991.

--Disseminate a positive message to refugees and displaced persons about the possibilities of voluntary return. The substance of the message would need to be worked out with the new government (to assure that guarantees would be respected) and with UNHCR. All gor representatives around the world would need to both hear for their own education and to disseminate the same positive messages.

--Begin organized voluntary repatriation movements with the 18,000 tutsi rwandan refugees who fled to Zaire during the initial wave of violence. Those tutsi refugees in Tanzania could also be moved as part of the first movements. Such a move would make sense from a refugee protection standpoint, but the impression that hutu refugees would not also be safe or that tutsis are somehow being favored by the new government and by the international community must be avoided.

--Maintain open borders in both directions so that there is no suggestion that would-be refugees are trapped inside Rwanda or that would-be returnees are being

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

prevented from doing so by political/military forces.

--Integrate former rwandan military into a new national military force.

--Form a government of national unity.

Material Assistance

--Preposition food and non-food items such as household tools, blankets, and who emergency health kits in Kigali for onward distribution along repatriation routes as repatriation picks up.

--Explore presence of mines in Rwanda and need for demining as related to repatriation/reintegration.

UNCLASSIFIED